



State House Photo: Susan Bernstein
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Information

How many homosexuals I've come to know! **Boston**, this good old Puritan city, has them by the hundreds.

An anonymous letter written by a Bostonian in 1907 to the **Scientific Humanitarian Committee**, the German group believed to be the first gay emancipation group in history.

Bay Village and the Theatre District

1 The Napoleon Club-52 Piedmont St.- Opened in 1929, The Napoleon Club is a piece of living history. Housing a homosexual subculture in the '40s, it became exclusively gay in 1952. The dignified piano bar, with gilded wallpaper and uniformed bartenders, seems immune to vagaries of fashion. Regular crooners have been joined by such luminaries as **Liberace** and the Queen of Queens herself, Judy Garland, who visited the club every night for a week shortly before her suicide.

2 The Punchbowl-232 Stuart St.- It was the place to be on the day of the annual Beau Arts Ball, and on any given night one could expect a waiting line of several hundred. As one of Boston's best known early gay bars, a typical crowd in the '50s and '60s would be heavy on students, with some drag queens, hustlers and professionals. It closed in 1970 when the property was bought by the city.

3 Park Square and The Greyhound Bus Station formed a hub of gay action in the late '50s and early '60s. Located in the Staller building was the **Hayes Hickford**, a popular after hours gay club in the '50s. **John Preston** described his experiences in Park Sq. as a teenage hustler. "I was given a great deal of affection by the men I found in the alleys off Park Sq. I was guarded by a flock of black drag queens who just loved to mother a young boy from the country." The queens of Park Sq. became models for characters in his novel, **Franny, the Queen of Provincetown**.

4 Jacques-79 Broadway- Opening its doors in 1939, Jacques was a popular lesbian establishment in the early '70s. In 1975 it began having the drag shows that, along with a strong cross-dressing crowd are now its trademark.

5 The Other Side-78 Broadway - Opened from 1965-76, it was the bar to go to in its day. Among the many performers appearing there were **David Bowie**, and drag sensation **Sylvia Sidney**.

Downtown

6 Cavana's-335 Tremont St. NLS-A women's bar in the '50s, Cavanaugh's clientele included many out, self-identified and rough lesbians. When it was threatened with closure by the Alcohol Licensing Board unless the "girls" wore skirts, patrons took the brave, and for that time, unusual step of picketing the police station.

7 Carver St. NLS- Carver ran through what is now the Transportation Building, and is the site of two gay landmarks. Opened in 1959, **12 Carver** was a venerable piano bar. Upstairs was the early leather bar, **Herbie's Ramrod Room**, precursor to the **Boston Ramrod** now located on Boylston St. [44]. At 18 Carver was the **Lundin Turkish Baths**, known as "Our Lady of the Vapors." It is reported to have been visited by Malcolm X immediately upon his release from prison.

8 Parkman Bandstand-Boston Common- On June 18, 1977 Gay Pride Rally keynote speaker Charles Shively staged an infamous display of radicalism. In condemnation of Prudential Insurance for not allowing him to list his lover on his policy, he burned the document. Also burned were copies of his Harvard diploma and the state sodomy laws. Finally, after reading from the Bible the condemnation of homosexuality in Leviticus, it also was burned. This action spurred heated debate within the lesbian and gay community.

9 Tremont Temple- Shortly before her death in 1993 to breast cancer, poet **Audre Lorde** was honored in a conference here for her work in the struggles for the civil rights of lesbians and women of color. Hundred's of people from all over the U.S. attended this event which was organized by Boston lesbians. Down the street at the Music Hall [45] on Winter and Tremont streets, **Oscar Wilde** delivered his second Boston lecture.

10 Playland-21 Essex St.- Described by its manager as a bar for "drugs, drags and dysfunctions," Playland is the oldest continually operating gay bar in Boston. Opened in 1937, it has attracted a gay clientele since the '40s. Despite a "perennial Christmas-in-the-dungeon" decor, Playland has a history of good works, serving Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners to homeless gays since 1950.

11 Club La Grange Bath-4 Lagrange St.- Unused but recently renovated, this H.H. Richardson building held Boston's outlet of the Club Bath chain. Remembered by writer **Michael Bronski**, who worked there as a towel boy 1978-79, for its luncheonette business plan, Club LaGrange was at the forefront of pre-AIDS gay health concerns in offering weekly VD testing.

12 22 Bromfield St.- A mid-'70s gay community center of sorts, 22 Bromfield provided space for such groups as the **Glad Day Bookshop**, which can now be found at 673 Boylston[46]; **Boston Asian Gay Men and Lesbians**, the first gay Asian group in North America; the **Black Men's Caucus**; the **Committee for Gay Youth**; and **Lesbian and Gay Media Advocates**. Also housed here were **Gay Community News**, **Fag Rag** (an important journal), and the first meeting of the **Boston Area Lesbian & Gay History Project** in February 1980. Its bathroom is recalled as perhaps the only co-gender public sex spot in the city. A fire, reportedly at the hands of Boston fire fighters, ended its history as queer space. At 30 Bromfield St. was **Other Voices**, Boston's first gay bookstore.

13 Pilgrim Theater-658 Washington- Built in 1912, this combat zone porn movie house is the oldest continually operating theater in Boston. Its site is now slated for demolition and redevelopment.

14 Jolar Cinema-Essex and Washington-The 1975 arrest of a radio personality and gay activist here for open and lewd behavior resulted in an important public sex court ruling. The defense successfully argued that because the defendant's actions took place behind closed doors they were private. The **Jolar** closed in 1980.

15 Somewhere-295 Franklin St.- From 1977 through the mid-'80s, this was the lesbian bar in Boston. Managed by former Laison to the Gay and Lesbian Community and Chief of Health and Human Services, **Ann Maguire**, it was a major stop on the lesbian folk music circuit, and the site of many hot nights of dancing. Closed due to fire in '83, it reopened as **Somewhere Else**. Upstairs was a men's health club/bath, the **Spa Over Somewhere**.

1648

The Massachusetts Body of Laws and Liberties was published in 1648, and was the first collection of laws in the colonies. Execution was mandated for the crime of "sodomy." After the unification of the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay Colonies, a 1697 revision to this statute includes references to bestiality, and renames the crime "buggery." *"An Act for the Punishment of Buggery"* was drafted to read, "... And that every Man, being duly convicted of lying with Mankind, as he lieth with a Woman; and every Man or Woman that shall have carnal Copulation with any Beast or Brute Creature, the Offender and Offenders, in either of the Cases before mentioned, shall suffer the Pains of Death, and the Beast shall be slain and burnt." Buggery was a capital crime in Massachusetts until 1805.

1642

Elizabeth Johnson, a servant in Essex County, Massachusetts, was sentenced to be fined and "severely whipped" for "unseemly practices" with another maid, and for "stubbornness to her mistress" and "stopping her ears...when the Word of God was read."

1786

The first house on Pinckney St., now number five, was erected by a "mulatto barber" named Louis Clapion and a Black coachman, George Middleton, a life-long bachelor and a leader of a celebrated all-Black regiment in the Revolutionary War. At his death in 1815, he left all his possessions to "my good friend Truston Babcock", a mariner who lived on West Cedar St.

33 opp. side

1850's

In Mt. Auburn Cemetery [x] in Cambridge, a sculpture by the prominent 19th century African American / Native American lesbian artist **Edmonia Lewis** [A] can be seen, as well as the grave of her friend **Charlotte Cushman** [1816-1876] who, as the most famous Shakespearean actress of her day, played Romeo to many other actress' Juliet. She spoke frequently of her numerous intimate relationships with women, the most famous of which was with sculptor **Emma Stebbins**, who wrote Cushman's biography. Another important sculptor and Cushman flame represented at Mt. Auburn is Harriet Hosmer, who was buried here in 1908.

34

Now one of Boston's foremost cultural institutions, what is now the **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum** was known as the point of liaison between hetero and homo Boston. Isabella Stewart Gardner's circle of friends included U.S. Representative, **A. Piatt Andrew**; **Henry Sleeper**, the foremost interior decorator of the day; and architect **Ralph Adams Cram** [x]. Her closest friend was the painter **John Singer Sargent** [1856-1925] who, when Gardner's Venetian style pallazzo was completed in 1904, made a studio out of the Gothic Room, where his famous portrait of Gardner now hangs. Sargent, whose homosexual leanings can perhaps be seen in his nude portrait of his valet, also painted murals in the old rotunda at the Museum of Fine Arts, just next door, and at the Boston Public Library.

35

1900

The diary of **Richard Cowan**, which is held at the Boston Atheneum, chronicles a very gay life in the 20's and 30's in Boston. One entry from mentions the Monarch Club [465 Stuart St. 1933-34, and 477 Stuart St. 1935-1937], which may have been a neighborhood forerunner of the more famous and longer-lived **Punchbowl** [2], and the larger cruising, hustling and drag scene at Park Square in the 50's, 60's and 70's. The entry reads, "One night at the Monarch Club I met a boy whom I had seen once before at the Copley Theatre and once on the subway."

36

1931

Harvard professor, literary critic, socialist and "father of American Studies" F.O. Matthiessen jumped to his death from a room on the 12th floor of the Hotel Manger in this year. Matthiessen's depression was fueled by the anti-communist and anti-gay witch hunts of the time, and by the death of his lover, painter Russel Cheney. Their 20-year love affair is chronicled in a book of their correspondence, **The Rat and the Devil**. Lesbian writer, May Sarton, used Matthiessen as the basis of her book, **Faithful are the Wounds**.

37

1950

78 Pride March

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Wounds

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1978

1978 Pride March

GCN Photo Archive

45

We are everywhere

We will be free!

PRIDE WEEK BOSTON 1978

46

1978 Boston Public Library Arrest Protest

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47

78 Boston Public Library Arrest Protest

Photo: Ken Rabb
GCN Photo Archive

48

1980

Claddagh Restaurant-113 Dartmouth St.- Boston's chapter of the Log Cabin Club, the national group of conservative gays and lesbians

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meets here. This chapter grew out of Michael Duffy's unsuccessful

50

1988 bid to unseat state representative Byron Rushing. Duffy was later appointed to head the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination by then newly elected Governor William Weld.

51

Rustlers-Chandler and Berkeley- Now the gay bar **Fritz**, the appearance of this and other bars in the South End in the early '80s was a visible sign of the increased gay presence in this part of the city. The South End now has the

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highest per capita population of gay people in Boston. Jamaica Plain, which is the location of the offices for the lesbian feminist journal **Sojourner**, as well as the women's bookstore **Crone's Harvest**, has, along with Somerville, a strong lesbian constituency.

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1980

Gay Community News-666 Boylston-Its 70's addition designed by ar-

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chitect Philip Johnson, the BPL was the center of controversy when over 100 men were arrested for allegedly having sex in the bathrooms over a one week period in 1978. Activist response to this outrage con-

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tributed to the foundation of Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders. Across from the library on Dartmouth St. [11] there is a plaque dedi-

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cated to mystic poet and painter **Kahlil Gibran** [1883-1931.] The

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plaque refers to "artistic sustenance" he received at the BPL and at Dennison Settlement House[16]. Gibran, a protege of F. Holland Day, was believed to be a homosexual.

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1980

Arlington St. Church- For the past 30 years, this Unitarian Universalist

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church has been gay positive. Many groups have met here, including **The**

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Homophile Union of Boston, **Boston Unitarian Universalist Gays and Lesbians**, **Dignity-Boston**, and the **Boston Gay Men's Chorus**, which re-

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hearsed here until 1994. The first same-sex marriage was held here in 1973, and the church's senior minister, **Rev. Kim K. Crawford Harvie** is a lesbian.

62

South End

Denison House-93 Tyler St. NLS- Founded in 1892 by Wellesley College

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professor **Vida Dutton Scudder**, settlement houses were created to ease

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immigrant transition to American culture. Scudder maintained a Boston mar-

65

riage with **Florence Converse**, author of the lesbian overtone novel **Diana**

66

Victrix [1897]. Settlement houses are widely held to be the birthplace of our modern social service system. Denison House is now located in Uphams Corner, Dorchester.

67

Claddagh Restaurant-113 Dartmouth St.- Boston's chapter of the Log

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Cabin Club, the national group of conservative gays and lesbians

69

meets here. This chapter grew out of Michael Duffy's unsuccessful

70



80 Scollay Square NLS - Speakeasies in the 20's and 30's, such as Crawford House were places where gay people met during Prohibition.

81 Old West Church-131 Cambridge St. - Services of the Metropolitan Community Church are held here. MCC was founded by gay rights pioneer Troy Perry, who spoke here in 1972. The predecessor organization to Boston's community of lesbian, gay and bisexual Jews, Am Tikva met here. Founded in '77, Am Tikva now meets at Temple Sinai in Brookline.

78 JFK Federal Building-City Hall Plaza- To protest the war in Indochina, Gay Liberation Front activists gathered on Tax Day in 1970.

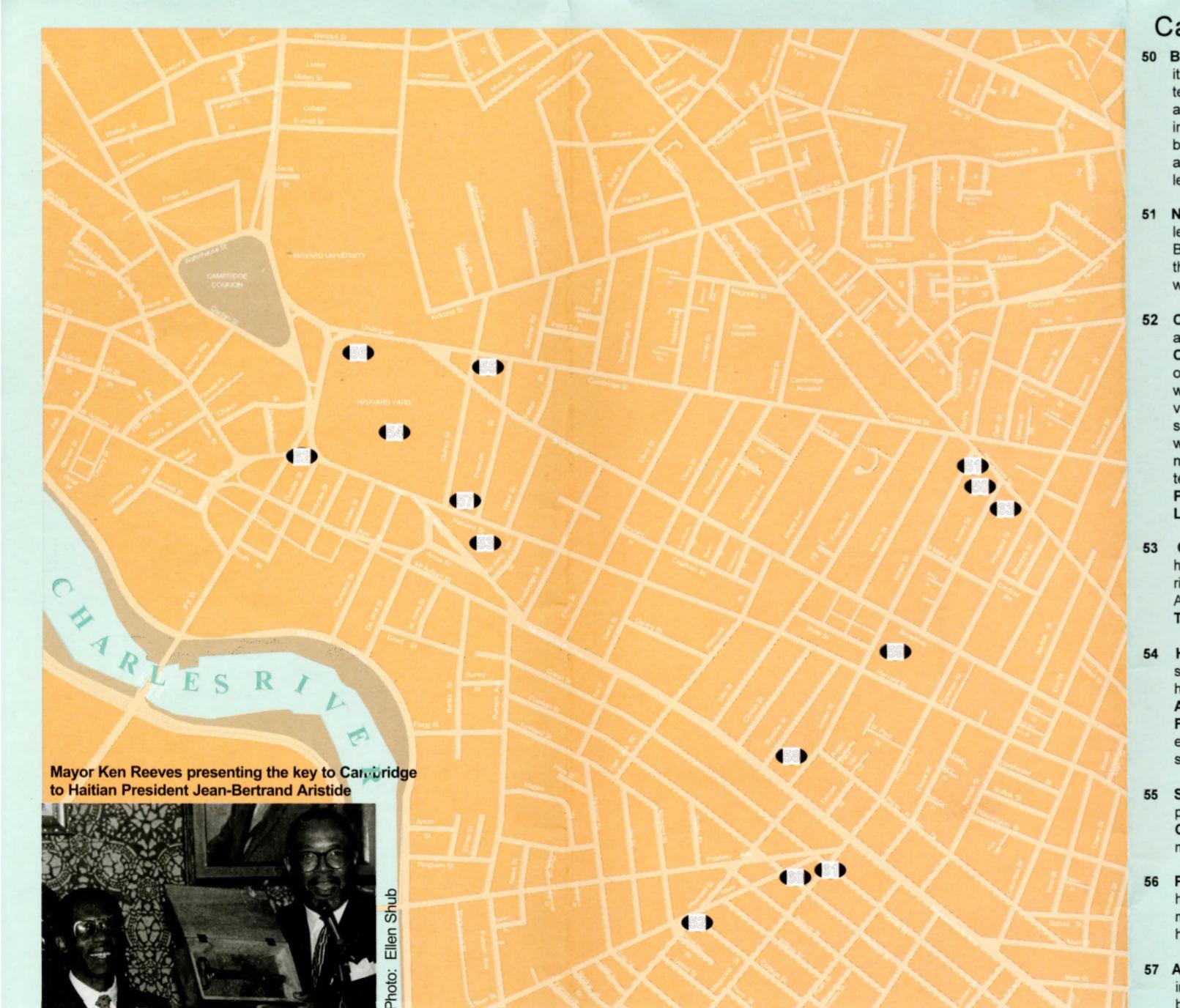
79 City Hall- 1984 marked the passage of the Boston Human Rights Ordinance, the first legislation in the state to protect the civil rights of lesbians and gays. Written by openly gay city councilor David Sondors, it is seen as a precursor to state-wide civil rights protection in 1989. Mayor Flynn's failure to promptly appoint a commission led to a sit-in by gay activists at his residence.

Beacon Hill, Scollay Square

- 66 The Church of St. John the Evangelist-35 Bowdoin St. - This church was the meeting spot of the Homophile Union of Boston and the Student Homophile League, two early gay groups, and is the meeting place of Boston Area Gay and Lesbian Youth [BAGLY]. It is also the site of services for Dignity, the gay Catholic group. St. John's has blessed gay marriages of parish members since 1990.
- 67 Esplanade Paperback-107 Charles St-Reputed to have a crusty poetry section, this early gay-run bookstore also sold pornography and sex toys.
- 68 Sarah Orne Jewett-148 Charles St-NLS- Jewett, the author of novels The Pointed Firs and Deephaven resided here 30 years with companion Annie Fields until her death in 1909.
- 69 F. Holland Day-9 Pinckney St.-A leader in the aesthetic group The Decadents, Day (1849-1933) was famous as a photographer obsessed with the male form and as a mentor to many young men whom he photographed, including Kahlil Gibran. Friendly with Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley, his studio was located here from 1894 to the turn of the century when a fire destroyed virtually all his prints and negatives. Though he continued to produce brilliant work, his reputation dwindled, and has only recently been revived.
- 70 Henry David Thoreau-4 Pinckney St.-The author of Walden resided here. A memorable metaphor attributed to him is "These young buds of manhood in the streets are like buttercups in the meadows."
- 71 Louisa May Alcott-43 Pinckney St.-The author of the ever-popular Little Women, she presented the Boston marriage as an ideal arrangement in An Old Fashioned Girl. She was very close with other Boston feminists Charlotte Cushman [Miss Cameron in Jo's Boys] and Emma Stebbins. She lived here in the late 1860s.
- 72 Ralph Adams Cram-99 Pinckney St.-America's greatest church architect, he designed the interior of The Lady Chapel at The Church of the Advent as well as many other buildings in the Boston area. An important figure in Boston's arts scene in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, he was friendly with Isabella Stewart Gardner.
- 73 67 Mount Vernon Street- Home of Edward Perry Warren (1860-1928), who rejected life in Boston, and "the traditions of Puritanism, the ugliness of the men and the absence of aesthetic sympathy" and moved to Europe where he collected antiquities for the Museum of Fine Arts (including homoerotic Greek vases, which were kept from public view for many years) and authored the notorious A Defense of Uranian Love, a study of boy-love in ancient Greece (1928).
- 74 112 Charles St.-The garden at this address was designed by architect Eleanor Raymond in 1926, who practiced in the Boston area until the late 40's. Interested in the integration of architecture, technology and landscape, she maintained a Boston marriage with Ethel Power.
- 75 Prescott Townsend-15 Lindall Pl.- Founder of Boston chapter of the Mattachine Society in 1959, Townsend, an experimental architect by profession, lobbied for the repeal of the state's sex laws, which stipulated 20 years' imprisonment for "the abominable and detestable crime against nature." After Mattachine dissolved in 1961, he founded the Boston Demophile Society. He died in 1973.
- 76 Sporters-228 Cambridge St.-A Beat poet hangout before it became a gay bar in 1957, Sporters became the most popular gay bar in New England after it was mentioned in John Reit's 1973 autobiography The Best Little Boy in the World.
- 77 Gerry Sawyer Square-Cambridge and Garden Sts.-A few yards from Sporters a sign marks this street intersection in honor of Gerry Sawyer, a bartender at Sporters and community activist. Sawyer, who lived on Garden St. died of AIDS in 1985 and is remembered as a local hero. His name is misspelled on the plaque.

Cambridge

- 50 Bread and Roses-134 Hampshire Street-1974-78- Bread and Roses and its successor Amaranth were women owned restaurants and cultural centers. Audre Lorde, Ntozake Shange, Tillie Olsen, Alice Walker, Kate Millett and a variety of artists were showcased regularly. This was where meetings were held for the Bessie Smith Memorial Production Collective, a black feminist musical/artistic group of the mid-70s. These restaurants and their counterpart Beetles Lunch in Allston were important places for lesbian socializing and organizing in the 70s and early 80s.
- 51 New Words-186 Hampshire Street-Founded in 1974 by a women's collective, New Words is now the major lesbian/feminist bookstore in the Boston area. The original location of New Words was in Somerville. Also the same address was focus counselling for women. Across the street was located the Feminist Credit Union.
- 52 Cambridge Women's Center-46 Pleasant St- Founded in 1971, this still active resource center was the meeting place of the Combahee River Collective, which was founded in Roxbury in 1974 by Barbara Smith and other women of color. During its six years of existence, this black women's group worked on many issues including reproductive freedom, violence against women and racism, sexism and heterosexism within our society. The group did a great deal of work around murders of black women in Roxbury in 1979. Though not an exclusively lesbian group, much of its leadership and many of its members were lesbians. The Center was also the meeting place for the Lesbian Research Project and Lesbian Mothers Support Group. Since 1971, Lesbian Liberation has been meeting there weekly.
- 53 Old Cambridge Baptist Church-1151 Mass. Ave- Since the late 70's this has been where the Daughters of Bilitis met. D.O.B. was the first lesbian rights group in the nation, and this is the sole remaining chapter in the country. Also located here is the local headquarters of the National Lesbian and Gay Task Force.
- 54 Harvard and Radcliffe- A roster of queer luminaries to have either taught or studied here- or had sex in the bathrooms- would be long indeed. Such a homophobe list would no doubt include, writers Gertrude Stein, Horatio Alger, Adrienne Rich and Frank O'Hara; openly gay Mass. congressman Barney Frank; and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, who authored many journal entries referring to his infatuation with fellow undergraduate Martin Gay. While a student at Harvard, gay architect designed his Cambridge residence on Ash St.
- 55 Sanders Theater-At Sanders Theater at Harvard, lesbian activists organized a poetry reading with Audre Lorde and Adrienne Rich to benefit the Support Group for Women's Safety, an organization formed in response to a rash of murders of black women in the late 70s.
- 56 Phillips Brooks House-Harvard Yard- Men of All Colors Together meets here. Founded in 1980 by John Bush, this group provides a support system for men in interracial relationship, provides education around AIDS and HIV and hosts an annual Martin Luther King Day brunch.
- 57 Alice James-20 Quincy St. NLS- A plaque marks the address that, beginning in 1866, was the home of the famed James family. Though overshadowed by brother Henry, Alice was brilliant in her own right, and her diary was published to critical acclaim. Of her love relationship with Katherine Loring Peabody, Henry James wrote, "a devotion so perfect and generous...was a gift so rare...that to brush it aside would be almost an act of impurity." Henry James' own sexuality has long been a subject of speculation.
- 58 City Hall- Ken Reeves, the first African-American, openly gay mayor of Cambridge was elected in 1992.
- 59 183 Prospect St.- In the fall of 1970, the Gay Liberation Front planned a dance on the campus of M.I.T. The dean of the university at the time would not allow the dance to be held because it might traumatize the students. Activists threatened to close M.I.T. with sit-ins and other protests. A compromise involved the dean's provision of \$500 for the founding of a gay community center at this address.



63 AXA- 22 JFK- The Amazon Cross-Dressers, an group of cross-dressers, pre/ post-operative transsexuals, transgender meets here. Founded in '90, an off-shoot of AXA is the group Transgender Pride, which organizes participation in Pride celebrations by the gender community. The International Foundation for Gender Education, an organization founded in 1986, serves as an education and information resource for 300 transgender groups and 10,000 individuals worldwide. Located in Waltham, IFGE publishes the TV/TS Tapestry, Enterprise, a peer support group for female-to-male transsexuals meets in Jamaica Plain, and conducts educational workshops in schools, religious organizations, the medical and gay communities.

60 Gay Male Liberation-91 River St.- Now called the Lucy Parsons Bookstore, this group met here in the early 70's when it was called Redbook.

61 WCAS-380 Green St.-The first gay radio show in Boston aired here. "Closel Space" was hosted by Charles Bedford, Cambridge City Councilor Katherine Triantafillo, and by former state rep. Elaine Noble.

62 888 Memorial Drive-Saturday, March 6, 1971 over 200 women occupied this Harvard-owned building for ten days. This protest was undertaken to dramatize the need for a community-based Women's Center. Many women came out during this ten day occupation, and the foundation of the Women's Resource Center [x], and Gay Women's Liberation (later Lesbian Liberation) were a direct result of this action.

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